

Winter Gastronomic and Hiking Tour

Trip Itinerary for Lisbon, Portugal, and La Gomera, Canary Islands, Spain

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Start with three days in Lisbon, one of Europe's most vibrant yet laid back cities with outstanding culture and a thriving gastronomic scene. Follow this with a week in nature, hiking one of Europe's great undiscovered trails, the GR 132 on La Gomera, one of the unspoiled and wild western Canaries, a group of islands belonging to Spain, situated off the coast of Morocco. With average daytime temperatures in Lisbon of 16C (60F) and in La Gomera of 21C (70F), this is the ideal trip to kick the winter blues.

Your guides, Kiki Keating and Nick Barniville, have put together the ultimate winter escape in Europe's southern Atlantic. Kiki is an intrepid explorer from New Hampshire and loves to find

adventures off the beaten path. Nick is an avid cook and hiker, originally from Ireland, who made La Gomera his home during the Covid pandemic, discovering the beauty of this volcanic island and its empty, breath-taking trails.

Quick Summary

Duration:	10 days
Starting point:	Lisbon (LIS)
End point:	Tenerife South (TFS)
Tour start date:	Fly out February 15 th , start February 16, 2024 from Lisbon
Tour end date:	25 February 2024
Max. participants:	12
Note:	La Gomera is hilly, and we will be hiking. A good level of fitness is required.

All accommodation, flight from Lisbon to Tenerife, return ferries from Tenerife to La Gomera, and all group transport and entrance fees are included. Lunches are included on most days, as are six group dinners.

Tour Highlights

Lisbon

- Experience the Alfama, one of Europe's most authentic historical old town districts
- Follow the trail of Christopher Columbus through the streets of Belem, taking in the fascinating Museum of Lisbon's Geographical Society to discover Portugal's historical global influence
- Take in a "Fado" session in the lively Bairro Alto, Portugal's hauntingly beautiful melancholic ode to a culture of resignation to fate
- Visit Sintra, the "Moon Hill", a majestic UNESCO World Heritage Town an hour from Lisbon
- Eat some of Europe's most innovative cuisine building on Mediterranean and African influences

La Gomera

- Experience the simple island life far from the madding crowds on one of Europe's most beautiful volcanic islands
- Hike the phenomenal GR 132 trail through the rainforest during the early spring, transitioning from the desert-like rocky south of the island through the central forest to the lush banana plantations of the north
- Take in spectacular views of El Teide, Tenerife's 3,700m (12,000 ft) volcano
- Spend an afternoon spotting pilot whales and dolphins on a boat from Valle Gran Rey, a laid-back hippy outpost hidden on the island's west coast.
- Enjoy famous local delicacies such as almogrote (a spicy cured cheese mixed with olive oil and peppers), estofado de cabra (goat stew), fresh Atlantic fish and papas arugadas con mojo, (the famous Canarian wrinkly potatoes).
- Sit back and enjoy the views at the Parador de San Sebastian, a converted historic hotel overlooking the port of San Sebastian

Here's what lonelyplanet.com has to say about La Gomera:

“From a distance La Gomera appears as an impenetrable fortress ringed with soaring rock walls. Noodle-thin roads wiggle along cliff faces and up ravines, and the white specks that turn out to be houses seem impossibly placed on inaccessible crags. Up-close, however, that rough landscape translates into lush valleys, awe-inspiring cliffs, glittering black-pebble beaches and bold rock formations sculpted by volcanic activity and erosion.

Without the standard tourist-resort trappings of golden sands and animated nightlife, La Gomera has a tangible bohemian air; many foreign residents arrived here in the 1960s flower-power days. Pastel-painted capital San Sebastián is the low-key hub, while the laid-back southern beach towns draw sunseekers. The island is relatively laborious to reach, and, apart from those day-tripping from Tenerife, most visitors tend to be walkers heading for the hiking trails that weave across this spectacular land, which unravels around the ancient Laurisilva (laurel) forests of Garajonay.”

Tenerife

- After admiring El Teide from a distance, hike or take a cable car to the top of Spain's highest mountain
- Spend the last night in the El Teide Parador, located in the middle of the lunar landscape of the Teide National Park

Tour Itinerary _____

Day 1: Lisbon, February 16th



Arrive to Lisbon

Individual arrival into Lisbon (direct flights from many US cities including BOS and JFK, as well as connections via Madrid). Settle in at the 5 Star The One Palacio da Anunciada, situated in a 16th century palace with extensive gardens on a quiet street just a stone's throw from Avenida Liberdade, Lisbon's fashionable thoroughfare. Meet the rest of the group for dinner at a typical Tasca such as O Velho Eurico near Sao Jorge Castle.

Day 2: Lisbon, February 17th



Train Ride and a Fado Concert

Start the day with a tram ride through the famous Alfama district, where a local guide will show you the nooks and crannies of this quirky neighborhood. After a casual street lunch, explore Belem and learn about the famous explorers such as Christopher Columbus, who lived in Portugal from 1476-1485 before setting sail for the New World. Sneak in a few famous Pasteis de Nata (flaky custard pies) from the Pasteis de Belem. Dine at one of Lisbon's celebrated seafood *cervejarias* such as Cervejaria Ramiro, followed by a fado concert in the Bairro Alto. Overnight in The One Palacio.

Day 3: Sintra, February 18th



Day Trip to Sintra

Take a day trip to Sintra, a Moorish World Heritage Site hill town less than an hour from Lisbon. Explore this architectural gem in the hands of a local historian, stopping for a light lunch en route. Use the evening to explore Lisbon on your own.

Day 4: Lisbon – Tenerife – La Gomera, February 19th

Depart the Hotel Britannia at a civilized hour (after breakfast) for an 11:40 am flight to Tenerife's South Airport (2-hour flight), transfer by taxi to the ferry port at Los Christianos. Hop on a fast ferry



(one hour) to San Sebastian de La Gomera before checking in to the Parador, a 5-minute ride from the port. Sample the best island cuisine with a group dinner at the Parador restaurant.

Day 5: *La Gomera*, February 20th



Hiking the GR 132 – from Alto de Garajonay to La Laja

(10km, descent 1000m)

Start with a 45-minute taxi transfer to the near the top of the now extinct Garajonay volcano (1500m / 4800 ft), the highest point of La Gomera (from where, on a clear day, you can see the other islands of Tenerife, Gran Canaria, El Hierro and La Palma). Hike down through the Laurisilva rainforest and past incredible rock formations which frame your view of the blue Atlantic and the towering El Teide across the strait on Tenerife. End the hike at La Laja, a peaceful village nestled in the valley of San Sebastian before a short taxi ride back to the Parador. Enjoy the evening exploring San Sebastian (population ca. 5,000) at your leisure (or book a massage in the Parador).

Day 6: *La Gomera*, February 21st



Hiking the GR 132 - from Arure/Alojera to Valle Gran Rey

(15km, 300m ascent, 1400m descent)

After a taxi transfer to the start of today's half day hike, we spend the morning ambling down the valley to Valle Gran Rey, a bohemian outpost which feels like the end of the world. The views throughout the day are stunning. After a quick snack, we will take a rib (fast boat) on a two-hour tour out to sea, hoping to see majestic pilot whales and dolphins alongside our boat. The boat comes back along the cliff side, where occasionally breeding pairs of ospreys can be spotted in the cliffs. On disembarkation, we'll head for an early dinner at one of the seaside restaurants at the port and enjoy the sunset before heading back to the Parador in San Sebastian.

Day 7: *La Gomera*, February 22nd



Hiking the GR 132 – from San Sebastian to Hermigua

(25km, 950m ascent, 950m descent)

Pack up the bags and send them on ahead to the next destination, the Hotel Hecansa Los Herrera, in Hermigua. Set off on foot from the front door of the Parador, climbing along well-maintained trails over the ridge along the north-eastern side of the island, with sweeping views of deep valleys, craggy inlets, old agricultural lands and the ever-present El Teide. Stop for a picnic along the way, and a swim at the beautiful tiny beach of La Caleta. Descend into the Hermigua valley before enjoying a cold beer at Pedro's, La Gomera's most famous terrace bar overlooking the banana plantations. Freshen up at the Hecansa and head for dinner in-house at the Hesperia de Hermigua, a high-end culinary training school for Canarian chefs.

*For those who want to shorten the hike, a taxi transfer is available to the mid-point

Day 8: *La Gomera*, February 23rd



Hiking the GR 132 – from Tazo to Playa de Vallehermoso

(12km, 200m ascent, 500m ascent/descent)

Start with a taxi transfer up to the top of the island near Chorros de Epina to experience one of the most beautiful parts of the GR132, along the northern traverse. Starting out near Tazo, on the northwest of the island, the hike maintains an elevated route overlooking the village of Arguamul, before reaching the quaint Ermita Santa Clara, where we will stop for lunch. After this, we follow the path along the ridge overlooking the beautiful valley of Vallehermoso (which means “beautiful valley”), before descending into Playa de Vallehermoso, where a swim might tempt tired legs. After a refuelling stop for coffee or a beer at Casa Conrado, we transfer back to our hotel, the Los Herrera in Hermigua. Dinner is at an excellent local steakhouse, Las Chacaras (named after the castanet-like instrument indigenous to old Gomera).

Day 9: La Gomera to El Teide, Tenerife, February 24th



We pack up in Hermigua and take a taxi transfer to the port at San Sebastian for the morning ferry back to Los Christianos. On arrival, we transfer by minibus to check in at the Parador del Cañadas del Teide, in the middle of the lunar landscape of the Teide National Park. In the afternoon, weather permitting, we take the cable car to the station near the top of El Teide and admire the views across the entire Canarian archipelago. If there is interest, a guide can be booked to take the group on a hike to the summit. We get together for a final dinner together at the Parador.

Note: the cable car is often cancelled if it is too windy, and guides must be booked 4-6 months in advance for the trip from the cable car station to the summit as numbers are strictly limited for conservation purposes.

Day 10: Departure, February 25th

From Tenerife South or Tenerife North Airport

Taxi transfer to Tenerife South airport (1 hour) or Tenerife North airport (90 minutes) for onward travel. Same day options to return to the US are available to Boston (with Swiss, via Zurich) or to JFK (via Madrid). Returning to the US via Lisbon will require an overnight in Lisbon.

Price:

Price per person (Shared Room): \$5950.00 Single Room Supplement: add \$700

Airfare is not included in the trip price. All tours, entrance fees, and most meals (as indicated on the daily itinerary) are included. Alcohol is not included unless specifically noted.

Group size is 6 - 12 participants. A deposit of 20% is required to reserve your place.